



# News Release

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## Ten out of 18 Hermiston businesses pass OLCC minor sales check

**HERMISTON, OR** – Ten out of 18 businesses in Hermiston passed a check for alcohol sales to minors on Feb. 17. The compliance check was conducted by OLCC and the Hermiston Police Department. The 56 percent passing rate is well below the 2008 state average of 78 percent.

“The results from this sales check are disappointing,” said Jason Evers, OLCC Bend Regional Manager. “My hope is that the licensees and their employees will take advantage of our free I.D. checking class to learn how to prevent selling alcohol to a minor in the future.”

The commission performs the minor sales checks in an effort to reduce drinking by minors, which is a serious problem throughout the state. The OLCC tests about 1,400 licensed liquor businesses each year. Licensees or their employees can be held liable for alcohol-related damages and injuries if they serve or sell alcohol to a minor. Businesses who fail the compliance check may be re-checked.

The following licensees were tested and passed the compliance check; **Bi-Mart #655**, 200 S. First Pl.; **Walmart Super Center**, 1350 N. 1<sup>st</sup> St.; **Safeway Store #444**, 990 Hwy 395 S.; **Midway Tavern**, 1750 N. 1<sup>st</sup> St.; **Hermiston Tavern**, 425 N. First Place; **Cozy Corner Tavern**, 198 E. Main; **Last Chance Tavern**, 240 SW 11<sup>th</sup> St.; **Short Stop #1**, 32553 Pumkin Center Rd.; **Western Express**, 28810 Stafford Hansell Rd. and **Space Age Travel Center**, 77522 S. Hwy 207.

The following licensees were tested and failed the compliance check: **Big Smokes**, 1000 S. Hwy 395; **Mike's Market**, 905 W. Hermiston Ave.; **Western Express**, 1295 NW 11<sup>th</sup>; **Western Express**, 1050 S. Hwy 395; **Gotta Stop Mini Mart**, 1580 W. Highland; **Westside 76**, 710 W. Hermiston Ave.; **Hermiston 76/Circle K**, 1430 N. 1<sup>st</sup> and **Oxford Suites**, 1050 N. 1<sup>st</sup>.

Servers, bartenders and licensees whose employees sell alcohol to the minor or do not verify the minor's age, are subject to OLCC administrative penalties including fines or suspensions. Store clerks who sell can be cited with criminal charges and a minimum \$350 fine.

Under Oregon law, businesses in cities with a population of 20,000 or more have an equal chance of being randomly selected for a minor decoy compliance check. A business can also be selected for a compliance check if there is a documented complaint of sales to minors. Businesses in cities with a population under 20,000 and unincorporated areas in counties are not subject to these selection requirements.

During the sales checks, a minor volunteer attempts to purchase alcohol from a licensed business to see if staff are checking ID's correctly and refusing to sell alcohol to anyone under 21. Commission inspectors or other law enforcement officers supervise the minor volunteers. The volunteers carry their own legal ID and do not disguise their age or lie to encourage the sale of alcohol.

The OLCC offers a free training course on how to check ID's. Participants learn how to identify false identification and the laws regarding minors and alcohol. Additional training opportunities are available including classes for store clerks and service permit holders. Interested persons can call the local OLCC office to schedule a training session.

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*Promoting the public interest through responsible alcohol sales and service.*